



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Mathern Day Nursery  
The Old School  
Chepstow  
Monmouthshire  
NP16 6JH  
United Kingdom**

**Date of inspection: November 2013**

**by**

**Mary Dyas  
Reporting Inspector**

**for**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## About the setting

Mathern Day Nursery was established in 1989 by the present proprietor. It is housed in the old school building in a rural village near Chepstow and caters for children from six weeks old until they start at primary school. Many of the children in the pre-school group for three and four year olds have been part of the nursery for most of their lives.

Children attending the nursery come from a widespread area and move on to a number of different primary schools. There are 17 children on the register in the group. Fourteen are three-year-olds and three are four-year-olds. All are in receipt of funded educational provision.. They come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and 11 children are from homes where English is the main language. A very few children have been identified with additional learning needs and the setting has built up good relationships with other agencies to support their needs.

The pre-school group has the use of two relatively small rooms upstairs in the building with an adjoining toilet and washbasin. Other toilets downstairs are used when going to lunch or playing outside. The rooms are light and bright with children's work displayed on walls and ceilings.

Outside is a walled playground with an area of artificial grass and an expanse of tarmac painted with a track. The nursery also has the use of an adjoining field where they have developed a small allotment area where the children grow fruit and vegetables.

The Care and Social Standards Inspectorate Wales conducted a baseline review of the setting in November 2012 .

Estyn last inspected the setting in October 2007.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- All children are happy at the setting and enjoy their learning experiences;
- All children make good progress from their starting points;
- Relationships between children are good – they treat one another kindly and with respect;
- Adults in the setting know the children well and provide positive support for their learning and emotional wellbeing; and
- Practitioners provide a good range of activities that interest and engage the children.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The current self evaluation shows that management knows the setting well;
- There is evidence that progress is being made towards addressing the targets in the action plan; and
- Staff in the setting work hard and are committed to improving the provision.

## **Recommendations**

R1. Ensure adult-led focussed activities are fully planned to identify learning intentions and indicate specific provision for children of different abilities

R2. Consider ways in which parents and carers can be better informed about their children's progress and what they can do to help them to improve.

R3. Develop the use of Welsh to include a wider range of incidental words and phrases for daily use.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

Most children achieve good standards and make good progress across all areas of learning. They develop good thinking and problem-solving skills and concentrate and persevere with tasks for lengthening periods of time. Nearly all children are able to make themselves understood and listen to and carry out instructions. Most are developing good mark making skills and many are beginning to be able to write their name independently. Many children show an interest in books and choose to read them during their free play either independently or with a friend. They turn the pages correctly and are able to discuss the story and pictures.

Most children use mathematical language correctly in the course of their play and many count objects accurately to ten. They apply their numeracy skills to different situations and confidently discuss concepts such as how many objects in a number of pairs. Many also use information and communication technology with confidence, for example to play games on the computer or operate electronic toys.

All children understand the Welsh words and phrases they have been introduced to and respond appropriately to requests to count or name colours in Welsh. They join in with songs and rhymes in Welsh with enthusiasm and many are beginning to use the words they know spontaneously in their play and conversations with adults.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

All children are happy and feel safe in the setting. They thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting and are well motivated and engaged in the activities that they choose. They come into the setting eager to see what has been planned for the day and settle quickly to an activity. Children are confident and are involved in making decisions about their learning make clear choices about the activities in which they would like to participate.

All children behave well throughout the sessions. They are kind and considerate towards one another and share equipment willingly. Children are happy and confident in the setting and make independent choices about their learning. They concentrate well on the tasks they have chosen and sustain interest and involvement for appropriate lengths of time

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners plan together a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning activities based on themes that interest and engage all children. Planning takes into account the use Foundation Phase skills and takes into account the interests and suggestions of the children. Planned activities succeed in engaging children's interest and curiosity both indoors and outdoors and enable children to make good progress in communication, numeracy, ICT and the wider creative skills. There is, however, no provision to adapt planned activities for the needs of more able children or for those who may require additional support. Children learn to care about living things by sowing seeds and looking after the plants that grow and by caring for the nursery's rabbits, which often accompany them on their visits to the field behind the garden.

Welsh is well used during group times and practitioners use Welsh words incidentally throughout the sessions. Children count in Welsh when prompted and a majority know some colours in Welsh when asked. All children celebrate and learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate St David's Day. There are good opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and communities through the range of multicultural resources in the setting and through celebration of a range of festivals.

### **Teaching: Good**

The room leader and her assistant interact positively with the children. They know the children well, have a good understanding of the developing needs of each child and direct their questioning appropriately. Practitioners generally make good use of open questioning to encourage children to think for themselves and to find their own solutions to problems such as how to move a spider down a chute. There is a good balance between adult intervention and allowing children to follow their own ideas to develop their decision-making skills.

Practitioners observe the children incidentally and during focussed teaching sessions. The information gathered informs the next steps in planning and contributes to the local authority's assessment document which builds on an entry assessment. There are currently no arrangements for parents to receive regular information on the progress of their children or of what they can do to help them improve.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The daily routines in the nursery help to develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect. Children are well aware of the difference between right and wrong and behave accordingly. All children politely pass the food to one another at snack time and show initiative when tidying up at the end of free play sessions. Visits around the local area help children develop a sense of curiosity about the world and visitors from the community help them appreciate differences in the way we live. Most children have known one another since they were babies in the setting and behaviour is good. They understand the need to share and to take turns and do so without the need for encouragement.

The setting has good arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners have received up to date training and understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides a warm and caring ethos where children grow in confidence and develop their learning in a safe and supportive environment. All children have equal access to all activities. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. There are good quality resources to support every area of learning and practitioners ensure that they match children's needs and the activities they have planned. The indoor accommodation is well maintained and secure. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities. The setting's outdoor area is safe and secure and practitioners take good care to exercise safe measures when taking children out into the local area.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The nursery director and manager have a very good understanding of the needs of the children in their care and of the requirements of the Foundation Phase for the children in the pre-school group. They are fully involved in the life of the nursery and have clear vision for the future development of the setting. A strong system of annual staff appraisals is supported by six monthly performance reviews and ensures that any concerns are quickly addressed. The nursery has a happy working ethos and staff turnover is low. Clear policies and aims are understood and implemented well by all practitioners.

Staff work closely together and have high expectations for themselves and the children. There is a culture of self-improvement amongst practitioners which helps to



develop and maintain the good work of the setting, ensuring that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision.

Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The nursery managers have worked together with the pre-school room leader to produce a self-evaluation document that demonstrates a good understanding of the setting and how the provision can be improved. Leaders understand the need to assess improvement against the impact on teaching and learning. Practitioners make time to listen to children's views and then reflect together to identify issues for further improvement. For example, the nursery rabbits were introduced into the setting in response to comments from the children that they would like to have some animals in the outdoor area. Parents are consulted for the annual review of practice. Practitioners regularly attend professional courses run by the Local Authority and other providers and procedures are in place for them to review the impact of this training on their practice in the setting.

### **Partnership working: Good**

A range of partnerships contributes to the progress and wellbeing of the children. It is part of the practice of the nursery to ensure that all parents and carers have the opportunity to speak to a practitioner when they collect their child. In order for them to be well-informed about their daily progress. The pre-school group has an informative notice board which includes an overview of the activities planned for the week. Close contact with a former parent has enabled the setting to establish a tooth brushing scheme to benefit the children.

The setting has good links with the school in Chepstow to which most children move on and the class teacher from the school visits the children in the setting.

The partnership with the local authority link teacher is purposeful and beneficial and has had a positive impact. Practitioners in the setting value the support they receive and the link teacher reports that the setting responds positively to training and to any advice and guidance. The setting makes good use of the local area to enhance the children's learning experiences.

**Resource management: Good**

Practitioners make use of one another's interests and abilities when deploying themselves during the sessions. The setting has a good range of resources which are used appropriately to support the planned activities. Practitioners work well together to ensure that the areas of learning both indoors and outdoors are effectively overseen to support children's learning.

The nursery manager ensures financial resources are available to support learning and developments in the setting. Spending decisions are appropriate and in line with the targets identified in the improvement plan.

The setting gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mrs Mary Elspeth Dyas	Reporting Inspector
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### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnership's conditions of registration.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.